

Grogan House (Eureka)
NW side County Rd. S2218,
1.7 mis. NE of State Hwy. 72
Middleton
Elbert County
Georgia

HABS No. GA-33

HABS,
GA
53-MIDT0,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
GROGAN HOUSE (Eureka)

HABS NO. GA-33

Location: Northwest side of Elbert County Road S2218, 1.7 miles northeast of the intersection of Georgia Highway 72, 800' southwest of Beaverdam Creek, Middleton, Elbert County, Georgia.

USGS Elberton East Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 17.337875.3775040.

Present Owner: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Present Use: Demolished in March 1980.

Significance: Built in the early 1870's by the Reverend John Henry Grogan, an itinerant Methodist minister, this house was of mortise and tenon construction. Known as the Grogan Home Place and owned by the Grogan family until 1974, the house was originally the center of John H. Grogan's milling and church activities. The massive granite piers which supported the building are one of the first known uses of quarried granite in the area.

PART 1. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Between 1870 and 1873. Although there is no written record of John H. Grogan's acquisition of the tract on which the house stands, several sources indicated this period for the date of construction. Waller Grogan, grandson of John Henry Grogan, has written that family tradition holds that the house was built in 1870. George C. Grogan, son of John Henry Grogan, wrote in the Elberton Star on September 11, 1902, that "in 1873 my father moved to Eureka...."

The Middleton M. E. Church, or Eureka Church (now called the Middleton Methodist Church), was built on a two-acre tract donated by John Henry Grogan in 1873. The same mortise and tenon construction techniques were used in the house and the church, possibly indicating the same builder and similar construction dates.

2. Architect: None known.

3. Original and subsequent owners: John H. Grogan's 1896 estate inventory described the home place as follows: "one tract known as the Home Place adjoining George C. Grogan, J. H. Grogan estate, mill tract and Beaverdam Creek on the north, W. Eugene Dye on the south and east, L.H.O. Martin and estate of Sarah Rucker, deceased, on the west, on which is located the dwelling, outhouses, etc. containing 120 acres more or less" (Book 77, page 189). His will describes the tract as 135 acres (Will Book C, page 17). There is no record of a purchase of land that would have been the Eureka home place in the Elbert County Deed Records before 1873. Grogan probably received the land through an unrecorded deed, a will, or an outright gift.

1867 Grogan did purchase a one-third interest in an 80-acre tract known as "the Rucker and Martin Mill Tract" on November 5, 1867 (Deed Book EE, page 43). This became what was known as Grogan's Eureka Mills, adjacent to the Home Place tract.

1900 By the time of his death in 1896, John H. Grogan had amassed over 1600 acres of land (Elbert County Tax Digests, 1896, 190 District). Although much of his property was sold off soon after his death, the Eureka House and home place remained in the family, as Grogan requested in his will (Will Book C, page 17):

"It is my will that the incumbrances on my property on the south side of Beaverdam Creek, the same being in Longstreet district including my house and one hundred and thirty-five acres of land, more or less, and five-sixths of the mill and ginning and all the appurtenances on said land be paid off by my executors as rapidly as practicable except the mortgage to my daughter, Sarah P. Grogan, to whom I am now indebted, and I hereby request that she hold said mortgages as long as the property which it covers is security for the debt or until the death of my wife. It is my will that all my property mentioned in this item be used and enjoyed by my wife during her life, but it must at all times be a home for my unmarried daughter provided she sees fit to occupy it."

J. H. Grogan's wife, Fannie, died on February 6, 1900. On November 1, 1900, Misses Sarah P. Grogan, Eliza Hall Grogan, Emma B. Grogan, daughters of J. H. Grogan and all of Washington, D.C., purchased the Grogan Home Place from J. H. Grogan's executors for \$2,400 (Deed book 130, page 190).

This deed states that the tract is 135 acres, more or less, as does the J.H. Grogan will. Accurate surveys of the tract now place the acreage of the tract at 108.42 acres (Plat Book 8, page 256). It is possible that when John H. Grogan indicated the 135-acre tract in his will he meant both the Home Place tract and the Eureka Mill tract, or that the indication of the Grogan home place as 135 acres was a simple mistake carried down through the records.

1928 On November 10, 1928, S.P. Grogan, B.H. Grogan, and Emma B. Grogan deeded the Home Place tract (135 acres) to Elmira Grogan, their niece, as a gift (Deed Book 54, page 274).

1973 Elmira Grogan held the tract until her death in 1973, when it went to her brother, Waller Grogan, as her only heir (No Administration Book 1).

1973 Waller Grogan sold the Grogan tract to Micco Corporation, Peyton S. Hawes, Jr., Alexander S. Hawes, and Mary Minor Brown on November 6, 1973, for \$24,394.50 plus 7% interest (Deed Book 104, page 153).

1979 Micco Corporation, Peyton S. Hawes, Jr., Alexander S. Hawes, and Mary Minor Brown sold the land on which the house stood (but not the house) to the United States of America on March 29, 1979 (Real Estate Files, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers).

4. Original plans and construction: The clapboarding of the symmetrical facade was painted white from the time of construction until the mid-twentieth century and the windows in the main block had green shutters. The paneled front door was surrounded by a transom window and side-lights of stained glass. The main part of the house had a wide central hallway separating the four downstairs rooms. The parlor, located in the southeast corner of the house, contained the best furniture. The other rooms in the main block were bedrooms. The two bedrooms on the second floor were used for storage when not occupied by a family member. A breezeway connected the dining room and kitchen with the main portion of the house.

5. Alterations and additions: No major alterations are known to have been made to the house. Running water was never installed. The house was wired for electricity ca. 1944. In about 1953, the roof was reroofed with composition shingles, placed over the original wooden shingles.

B. Historical Context:

John Henry Grogan was born in Spartanburg, South Carolina, in 1828. He was ordained a minister in 1851 and traveled for over twenty-two years, preaching at churches of all denominations (Memoirs of Georgia, 1:631). In 1865, Grogan bought the Brewer Home Place in the Flatwoods section of Elbert County (Deed Book DD, p. 157). In 1867, Grogan joined with some other members of the community to start the Flatwoods Academy, for which he served as trustee until his death (G.C. Grogan, Elberton Star, September 11, 1902; Star, July 31, 1896).

After building this house and moving here in the early 1870s, the Grogans quickly became one of the prominent families of the Middleton area. Grogan was well enough off to hire a coachman, and the inventory of his estate includes a carriage, a buggy, and a two-horse wagon.

His wealth was probably derived from his investment in the Eureka Mill, located just northeast of the house on the Beaverdam Creek. A mill was known to be on the site as early as 1828 (Deed Book V, p. 49). Grogan carried a controlling interest in the mill from the 1870s until his death in 1896. During this time the millsite included a machinery storehouse, shoe shop, blacksmith shop, the mill, and a dwelling house (Deed Book F, p. 329).

The 1875 Elbert County Tax Digest lists the company of Grogan and Bruce, which undoubtedly was the formal name at the time for Eureka Mills. The company owned 425 acres of land, worth \$7,000, had \$1,200 worth of merchandise, and \$25 worth of tools. The value of the whole property owned by the company was \$9,350. After Sydney Bruce's widow sold his interest in 1880, the firm was known as Grogan and Thornton (Deed Book FF, p. 329). Mallory J. Thornton lived at the house on the mill property and probably oversaw the running of the mills. The cotton gin was perhaps the biggest part of the operation. Grogan's 1896 estate inventory lists notes for several thousand pounds of cotton that were owed to him.

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On January 7, 1895, J. H. Grogan purchased a one-third interest in the mill, bringing his interest to five-sixths of the mill property at his death in 1896. After Grogan's death, his daughter Leila Grogan Hobbs bought the entire mill (Deed Books RR, page 456, and WW, p. 102). She planned an expansion, but it is unknown if this ever took place. The mill was washed away in the freshet of 1908, but may have closed down before then (Thornton interview).

Grogan's other source of income was from farming. The 1880 Agriculture Census shows him producing \$900 worth of farm goods, probably only for the consumption of his large family. Grogan paid \$150 in wages, probably to farmworkers. The Tax Digest of 1894 lists Grogan employing thirty hands, owning 1634 acres, and having \$1,550 worth of crops held for sale. Most of the hands and probably all of the crops held for sale, however, were probably concerned with the mill. Grogan owned only \$40 worth of livestock and \$15 worth of plantation and mechanic tools.

Grogan's main activity was preaching at Eureka Church. Built in 1873 on two acres of land donated by Grogan, the wood-frame church became known as the Middleton Methodist Episcopal Church and today is called the Middleton Methodist Church.

In July of 1896, Grogan was taken ill when returning home from a temperance meeting in Royston, Georgia. He died in Elberton (Star, July 31, 1896). After the death of his wife in 1900, Grogan's three daughters inherited the house. They lived in this house for some time, but also lived and worked in Washington, D.C. Their brother, William Manly Grogan (1862-1934), had worked in the Records Office in Washington, D.C., as a young man. He was seriously injured in the collapse of his office building, Ford's Theatre, on June 9, 1893 (Washington Evening Star, June 25, 1951). He returned to Eureka and lived in this house with his family until 1914. After this time, the Grogan house was occupied by tenants. In 1928, the three Grogan sisters left the house to William's daughter, Elmira, who owned it until her death in 1973. Elmira, crippled in childhood by polio, was a writer.

Elmira's brother, Waller, recalled:

Over many years she tried to rent the home--that it would be occupied--and two very good Negro families did and tried to keep it up--sometimes paying \$15-20 per month--mostly none. Fire insurance was costly--last insurer cancelled--not a good risk. (Waller Grogan, Jan. 30, 1977).

The "two very good Negro families" mentioned by Waller Grogan were the Allens and the Bowmans. Essie and Gilbert Allen lived there from 1944 to about 1957 when they moved to the Bowman Highway, Elbert County, Georgia. Rose Allen White, one of their daughters who lived in the house during 1944 and 1945 while her husband was away in World War II, was able to relate the following information about her father's farming practices. Mr. Allen had one mule to work his land. He grew cotton, corn, sweet potatoes, strawberries, and had a vegetable garden. The only crop grown for sale was cotton, which was taken to a gin in Elberton. Chickens and hogs were raised for family use. The Allens moved from the Grogan House in 1957, as Gilbert Allen had become too old to run the farm.

Ben Bowman and his wife, Elizabeth Jones Bowman, lived with seven children in the house from November 1957, until December 1972. Bowman's factory job began in the afternoon, so he used his mornings to farm. He grew a few acres of corn and cotton, and kept the rest of the land in pasture. He had two milk cows and a flock of chickens.

The house is located within the town limits of Middleton, incorporated in 1911. Middleton had a Post Office from 1891 until 1966. In the late nineteenth century, the area around the Grogan House was thought of as a separate community. A Post Office known as Eureka Mills was located there from 1872 until 1882. Postmasters were Sidney P. Bruce, Mallory J. Thornton, and John H. Grogan, each of whom had an interest in the mill at one time.

Prepared by:
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Assistant Historian
HABS
Summer 1980

PART 11. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The one-and-a-half-story frame Grogan House is built on a traditional center-hall plan.
2. Condition of fabric: Deteriorated at time of recording, demolished since.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: T-shaped, one-and-a-half stories. The front section measures 46'-2" across the three-bay front by 38'-0" deep. The rest of the building, which consists of two rooms separated from the front section by a breezeway, measures 38'-1" deep and 21'-4" wide.
2. Foundations: The structure is raised on granite piers except for the southwest corner and the south side of the rear ell, which appear to rest on the ground.
3. Walls: Frame construction covered by 4½" weatherboard siding, with evidence of white paint.
4. Structural system, framing: The walls are frame construction of hewn 2" x 4" timbers approximately 2'-2" on center. All jointing of wood members is mortise and tenon. The sills, hewn 9½" x 10½", have notching, evidence of dovetail jointing, and spikes which suggest that they came from another structure. They are lap-jointed, pegged and wedged.

The first-floor joists are stripped pine logs hewn on one side, averaging 6½" in diameter and spanning north-south (18') in three bays 2' on center. The second-floor joists are hewn 5½" x 6½" and 2'-3" on center, spanning north-south over the central hall and rear ell and east-west over the main rooms.

The roof rafters over the ell are logs hewn on one side, averaging 4" in diameter over the kitchen and 6" in diameter over the house. The house rafters are approximately 26' long and the ell rafters are approximately 16' long, 2'-3" on center. Attached to the rafters are 1" x 6" to 12" boards, with the original shakes fastened to them.

The second-floor wall studs are small logs hewn on one side and 3" to 4" in diameter.

5. Porches: The east front porch appears to be a later addition, according to foundation and structural evidence. The gable roof is supported by four wood lattice posts with a 2'-10" high rail between them. The rear ell has a 6'-3" wide porch on the north side running the length of the ell. The porch is covered by the roof of the ell, supported by wood posts with no evidence of rails. There is also a covered porch between the front section and the rear ell, 7'-11" wide.

6. Chimneys: There are three interior chimneys, two in the front section and one in the ell. The front chimneys are granite to a height of 16'-9" above the first floor and brick to the cap, which is 3'-0" above the roof ridge. The kitchen chimney is granite to the ceiling, then brick through the roof to the cap.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The doorways at both ends of the center hall are identical. They are wood paneled doors measuring 3'-3" x 7'-6" and are hung with concealed hinges. They are framed by three-over-three-light double-hung sash sidelights and a seven-light transom window. The doors in the rear ell are simple panel doors measuring 2'-10" x 7'-0".
 - b. Windows: Although no glass remains, the windows had nine-over-nine-light double-hung sash. The first-floor windows measure 2'-9" x 6'-6", while the second-floor windows are 2'-3" x 5'-9". There is evidence of shutters.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The gable roofs run north-south on the front section and east-west on the ell. Green asphalt shingles cover the original shakes.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: The eaves have plain fascia boards and overhang 1'-6", returning on the gable ends 2'-6".
 - c. Dormers: There are two gable dormers on the east front slope. They have six-over-six-light double-hung sash.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plan: In the front section, the central hall is flanked by four rooms, two on each side, each roughly 17' square. The rear ell has two rooms. The second floor has three rooms, one large one on the south and two rooms separated by the fireplace on the north side.
2. Flooring: The flooring consists of tongue and groove planking 6" wide on the first floor, spanning the joists east-west. The second-floor planking is 4" wide, running north-south.

3. Stairways: The straight-run stairway located in the center hall is lacking treads, balusters, and handrail.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls of the central hall consist of horizontal boarding ranging from 6 to 9" wide and 3/4" thick. The walls of the rear ell are also horizontal boards, 5" to 11" wide and 3/4" thick.

The walls of the four first-floor rooms have plaster over wood lath. The second-floor rooms, walls and ceilings, are sheathed in cedar boards. These boards are 8" to 1'-2" wide and are knotty and roughly sawn.

All of the ceilings on the first floor of the front section are boards, varying in width from 4" to 6" and 3/4" to 1" thick. The ceilings of the rear ell rooms are heavy cardboard with battens strips.

5. Doorways and doors: All of the doors are plain four-panel wood doors hung with recessed hinges.
6. Decorative features: All of the fireplaces have granite hearths of the same carving. The mantels have been removed. The fireplaces and chimneys on the second floor are plastered. Next to the fireplace in the kitchen are built-in shelves and cabinets.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces east on top of a hill in a pine woods area, situated among crepe myrtle, oak, cedar, magnolia and hickory trees. The road which passes by the house is not paved. Although now overgrown, a terraced walkway with English boxwood hedges led up from the road to the house.
2. Outbuildings:
 - a. Barn: At one time a barn stood across a dirt path to the north of the house site. The barn, destroyed by a storm ca. 1958, dated back at least to the turn of the century. The central part of the barn was used to store corn, peas, etc. Sheds on either side were used to store the wagon and farm animals.

- b. Well: The well was dug about the time the house was built (ca. 1870) and connected to the kitchen by a covered porch. In the fall of 1979, before the house was demolished, all that remained of the well was a board-covered hole.
- c. Smokehouse: Located just behind the kitchen, the smokehouse was built when the house was constructed (ca. 1870). The building was not in existence by 1944.
- d. Animal pen: Located to the northwest of the house towards the railroad tracks are the remains of a hog shed and pen. This pen was built by Gilbert Allen, who rented the house from 1944 to 1957.
- e. Privy: The privy, still standing in the fall of 1979, was located northwest of the house, just in front of the animal pen.

Prepared by:
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Project Supervisor
HABS
October 1979

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early Views:

Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Elberton, Ga. 30635, air photo 13105 173-75; photo shot 12/3/72.

University of Georgia air photo files. 1. 1938: photo JW-2-41, Index sheet 2 of 10; (only index sheet on file) 2. 1942: photo JW-2C-62, Index sheet 4 of 4; (photo and index sheet on file) 3. 1973: photo 13105 173-112, Index sheet 1 of 3; (only index sheet on file).

B. Interviews

Ben Bowman telephone interview, interviewed by Marcie Robertson, August 8, 1980.

Polly Colley interview, interviewed by Marcie Robertson, August 1, 1980.

Peyton S. Hawes, Sr., conversation, interviewed by Marcie Robertson, August 7, 1980.

Grace Thornton telephone and personal interviews, interviewed by Marcie Robertson, July 23 and July 24, 1980.

Rose Allen White telephone interview, interviewed by Marcie Robertson, August 12, 1980.

C. Bibliography

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

The Church Register of the Eureka Methodist Episcopal Church, in the possession of Reginald Todd, Middleton, Elbert County, Ga. 30635.

Elbert County Census of Agriculture, 1870-1880, Georgia State Archives, Archives and Records Building, Atlanta, Ga. 30334.

Elbert County Census of Population, 1870-1900, Georgia State Archives, Archives and Records Building, Atlanta, Ga. 30334. Also at University of Georgia Library, Athens, Ga. 30602.

Elbert County Deed Records, Clerk of Courts Office, Elbert County Courthouse, Elberton, Ga. 30635.

Elbert County Probate Court Records, Office of the Judge of the Probate Court, Elbert County Courthouse, Elberton, Ga. 30635. (includes Marriage, Will, Estate Returns, and Inventory and Appraisal Records).

Elbert County Tax Digests, 1873-1900, Georgia State Archives, Archives and Records Building, Atlanta, Ga. 30334.

Georgia Laws, Book for the year 1911, page 1395; Georgia State Records, Archives and Records Building, Atlanta, Ga. 30334

Waller Grogan letters; to Sybil D. Hall, Savannah District Corps of Engineers, Jan. 31, 1977, Jan. 30, 1977, June 13, 1977; to Marcie Robertson, August 13, 1980.

Real Estate Files, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Real Estate Office, Elberton, Georgia 30635.

Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832-September 30, 1971, Georgia, Decatur through Houston Cos., Micro copy No. M841, Roll No. 23, National Archives. (On file at the University of Georgia Library, Athens, Ga. 30602)

Records of A.P. Stevens, Jr., Elbert Co. Surveyor, meeting August 8, 1980.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Ellis, James M., National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, July 11, 1977. (This site was never placed on the National Register by the wish of the last owner before government acquisition)

"George Calvin Grogan," History of Georgia, Biographical, Vol. III, p. 19.

Grogan, George C., "An Old Deed, A Flatwoods Story," The Elberton Star, September 11, 1902.

Harris, Corra, A Circuit Rider's Wife, Philadelphia: Henry Altemus Co., 1910.

Harris, Emily J. and Hopkins, John L., O.A.H.P. inventory and project report for Richard B. Russell Dam Project Area, May 1, 1979.

"He Was There When Ford Theatre Fell," Washington Evening Star, June 25, 1951.

McIntosh, John H., The Official History of Elbert Co. 1790-1935, Atlanta: The Cherokee Pub. Co., 1968.

"Rev. John H. Grogan", Memoirs of Georgia, Vol. 1, Elbert County Sketches, page 631, The Southern Historical Association, 1895.

Thornton, Grace, church historian, "Middleton United Methodist Church," c. 1970.

Wilcox, Irene, "Rev. J. H. Grogan Traveled Over Ga. Delivering Message," The Elberton Star, April 1, 1980, p. 4A.

D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Building Conservation Technology, Nashville, Tn., Report on Eureka Mill. BCT is presently conducting archeological research on mill sites in the Richard B. Russell Dam Project Area for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. (August 1980).

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The documentation of the historic resources within the Richard B. Russell Dam project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service's Interagency Archeological Services, Atlanta, and cosponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Savannah District Office in compliance with Executive Order 11593 as a mitigative effort in construction of the lake. The project was executed under the direction of John C. Poppeliers, Chief, and Kenneth L. Anderson, Principal Architect of HABS. The emergency recording was carried out during the fall of 1979 by the Historic American Buildings Survey, Washington, D. C. Office, project supervisor Richard J. Cronenberger; staff architects Reginald A. Berry (Howard University) and David T. Marsh, Jr. (Howard University); and staff landscape architect Paul D. Dolinsky. The historical data was prepared in the summer of 1980 by LeAnne Baird, Project Historian, and Marcie Robertson, Assistant Historian. The written data was edited in the HABS office by Alison K. Hoagland in the spring of 1981.

ADDENDUM TO:
GROGAN HOUSE
(Eureka)
Richard B. Russell Dam Project
Northwest Side County Road
Middleton
Elbert County
Georgia

HABS GA-33
GA, 53-MIDTO, 1-

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001